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DEPT FOR IO, ISN, P AND D

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TAGS: AORC PREL PARM TRGY IAEA KNNP JA SF
SUBJECT: IAEA/DG ELECTION: FIRST DAY INCONCLUSIVE, AMANO
STILL IN THE FIGHT

REF: STATE 28852

Classified By: Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte for reasons 1.4 b and d

Summary

¶1. (S) The first three rounds of balloting for the IAEA Director General election on March 26 proved inconclusive, with neither candidate able to command the required two-thirds majority of the 35-member Board. The vote tally was 21(Amano)-14(Minty)-0 in the first round; 20(Amano)-15(Minty)-0 in both the second and third rounds. As instructed (reftel), the U.S. voted for Amano in all three rounds. South African Governor Minty's stronger-than-expected showing can be attributed to NAM solidarity abetted by a strategic vote on the part of those, likely to include Argentina, Mexico and Russia who, dissatisfied with either candidate, seek a clean slate. Japan attributes the notable lack of abstentions (which would have worked in favor of Governor Amano) to a last-minute decision on the part of some NAM countries to throw their support to Minty. Also notable was the lack of any shift after the first round to Amano, with no time in between votes for countries to get new instructions.

¶2. (S) Action request: Mission requests instructions for the leading candidate phase on March 27 to vote "Yes" on Amano and, should this vote be inconclusive, "No" on Minty. Abstaining on a Minty vote could inadvertently make him Director General (see para 7).

¶3. (S) Comment: It is too early to declare defeat for Amano. He still has the possibility of winning tomorrow if he can shift four-five votes to Yes or Abstain. But the Japanese, who were clearly disappointed by today's outcome, have been reminded that a secret vote like this can play out unpredictably. Should he lose, Japan confirmed that it will re-nominate Amano. The DG race will then be swung wide-open, with much confusion and disarray among a likely to be crowded field of candidates. End Summary and comment.

Minty Does Better than Expected

¶4. (S) In addition to Minty's core supporters (Cuba, Egypt, Malaysia, South Africa, Algeria, Brazil), it is likely that Russia, China, India, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Mexico and Ghana (which had pledged support to Amano), voted for Minty (Note: Burkina Faso, Ecuador and Uruguay claim to have voted for Amano. End Note). It is unclear who defected from Amano's camp to give Minty an additional vote in the second and third round. There appear to have been two motivations for Minty's support: a strategic vote by Argentina, Mexico and Russia to prompt a stalemate, and NAM solidarity on the part of some of the others. Meeting after the vote, the like-minded (Japan,

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, EU-3, U.S) were surprised by the strength of NAM solidarity, though it was not monolithic given the support of Ecuador and Burkina Faso for Amano. The UK noted that the solidification of the NAM vote was recent and unexpected. The NAM caucused before and after the voting and were generally in a self-congratulatory mood, with much back-slapping for Minty. The Africa Group also reminded members of the AU Summit decision to support Minty during the NAM meetings. According to a rather giddy Saudi counterpart, Cuba rallied the NAM and there was no expectation of NAM members shifting their vote the second day. The Cuban delegate was seen holding court at a reception just after the vote.

¶5. (C) Just before the voting, the South African DCM told us that he "wanted to get this over and done with as quickly as possible," underlining that Pretoria too was surprised by Minty's relatively strong performance. The New Zealand Ambassador confirmed Minty's own surprise.

Re-Calibrating for the Second Phase

¶6. (S) The election will now move into a second phase on March 27 with a majority vote to determine a "leading candidate", who will be subject to a Yes-No-Abstention vote by two-thirds. Should the leading candidate fail to gain two-thirds in a yes/no vote, a Yes-No-Abstention vote on the second candidate would ensue. Tokyo is already demarching Board members to reiterate its request for support and, in particular, urging Minty supporters not to vote against Amano in a Yes-No-Abstention vote, i.e. vote yes or abstain (Note: Abstentions lower vote-total threshold for victory. For

instance, if Amano can move two states to abstain, he only needs 22 to win; at four abstentions, 21 yes votes suffice. End Note.) Japan still believes there is room to influence those who voted for Minty in an up or down vote on Amano, which would not constitute voting against Minty. Japan is also cautioning Board members about the risks of a clean slate throwing the race wide open. In total, Amano would need some combination of four-five additional "Yes" votes or abstentions to win, assuming his current 20 vote commitments hold. Tokyo is demarching Ghana and India at the highest level. Up until the last minute Philippines had pledged support to Japan but appears to have voted for Minty. New Zealand reported that it was trying to encourage the Philippines to at least abstain.

¶7. (S) If Amano (who will presumably be the "leading candidate") does not secure two-thirds, there will also be a vote on the "second candidate," presumably Minty. The like-minded agreed that it would be essential to vote "No" on Minty, as in such a scenario abstentions would work in Minty's favor by decreasing the threshold for victory, i.e. to less than 24 votes.

¶8. (S) If the results are inconclusive on March 27, the Board Chair will announce a deadline for a new slate of nominations to be submitted "within four weeks" according to Rules of Procedure (the date can be less than four weeks) and the process begins anew. Japan will re-nominate Amano in such a scenario and several other expected candidacies will throw the race wide open. South Africa could also re-nominate Minty in light of his unexpectedly good performance. The date for another round of voting would be open to negotiations, but it is likely to be sometime in May.

SCHULTE